

**Testimony of New England Water Environment Association
before the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee**

In Support of
**Governor's Bill No. 842, An Act Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the
State for Capital Improvements, Transportation and Other Purposes**

Submitted by
Michael Bonomo, President of NEWEA
March 4, 2012

Senator Fonfara, Representative Widlitz, and members of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Governor's Bill No. 842, An Act Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State for Capital Improvements, Transportation and Other Purposes. The New England Water Environment Association supports the levels of Clean Water Fund bonding in this bill.

The Connecticut Clean Water Fund aids municipalities in essential upgrades to wastewater infrastructure, including sewer separation to remedy combined sewer overflows, and federally-mandated removal of nitrogen and phosphorus. To meet these needs, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has requested \$447 million in General Obligation and Revenue bonding for Fiscal Year 2014, and \$550 million for FY 2015. This is a smart investment: it is estimated that these funding levels will create or retain between 22,000 and 35,000 Connecticut jobs over the next two years. In addition, improved water quality for Long Island Sound and inland waterways will protect human health, maintain property values, make our communities more attractive for tourism, and support healthy fisheries and our shellfish industry.

The General Assembly's approval of historic levels of clean water funding for the 2012-13 biennium demonstrates legislators' understanding of the complex issues around sewer and stormwater improvement and the necessity of assisting municipalities with this work, and their commitment to protecting the Sound's water quality and our communities. Please continue this strong support.

The New England Water Environment Association represents over 2,000 water quality professionals who are working to promote the protection and enhancement of our water environment. We recently ran a Legislative Breakfast (February 13th), attended by several of your committee members, to articulate the need for a continued strong level of funding for the DEEP's Clean Water Fund. Importantly, we were joined by a broad coalition of practitioners of the clean water industry and environmental groups, all of whom recognize and agree on the importance of these grants and loans in the continuing campaign to improve Connecticut's waters.

We'd like to highlight several key points in support of Governor's Bill 842:

While we've made significant progress improving water quality, there is much yet to accomplish, including upgrading aging sewers and treatment infrastructure; removal of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) which impact water quality in our rivers, lakes and Long Island Sound; and abatement of combined sewer overflows which discharge partially treated wastewater from our largest cities every time we get significant rainfalls.


The Clean Water Fund works! The DEEP administers this program so that monies are used to support the state's highest priorities (there are more identified needs than the CWF budget can reach), including reserves for smaller-sized projects. Wastewater management projects are often some of the biggest their municipalities have undertaken, and the availability of CWF grants and loans is critical to getting local

approvals of these initiatives and in making them more affordable. Passing Bill 842 will provide funding continuity essential for making progress on these significant, costly and generally multiple-year projects.

Clean water projects mean jobs! 47 jobs are created for every \$1 million spent on these types of projects. Furthermore, a functioning water infrastructure is needed to support the state's economic vitality, including rehabilitation of some of our abandoned urban areas.

Please support our environment and our economy. We urge you to support the \$997 million in total Connecticut Clean Water Fund bonding requested by DEEP for the 2014-15 biennium. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Bonomo", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Bonomo
President, New England Water Environment
Association
77 Christianna Dr.
Monroe, CT 06468
203-257-3224